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Nature seems never to delight in extremes;- as a general rule they are certainly unsafe and dangerous. Neither heat nor cold are so agreeable as a gentle temperature. Passion is worse than equanimity of Temper; and Friend

ship is more agreeable & more lasting than love. Whether the frame is incapable of supporting much violent emotion or that calmness is best calculated to produce the ends of our pursuits, is a matter of indifference in our present enquiry; the fact is sufficient for our purpose. Men are commonly endowed with mediocrity of talent;—Genius is as rare and unusual as Idiotcy

Though such are the laws of Nature, there are

some cases in which she delights to display her power; giving an energy of soul characteristick of superior merit, calculated to raise the Individual to the utmost limit of mental superiority. As men are not generally called upon for much exertion, they have little occasion for character of mind;—a beaten path way is open before them along which they may proceed heedless of aught but the object ~~before them~~ in view; attending only

to the main chance of Fortune, ~~and its comforts~~.

The provisions of nature are doubtless wise & necessary. Were they the contrary, man should not arraign them. Did his life abound but with care and vexation, he would still have much to be grateful for. Existence itself is a need worthy of our warmest thanks. To be will repay any state of pain and suffering.

He who aspires to great attempts, must make great exertions. A

indolent pursuit can never succeed. A middle course will not lead beyond mediocrity of success. In their progress through the World, the strongest impulse that can force men on to exertion, is Enthusiasm, ~~the subject of this Essay~~ the noblest Energy that burns in the bosom of man.

Enthusiasm is that impulse which excites an uncontroulable desire to succeed in any honorable pursuit. The definition

has been more limited and originally meant that sentiment denominated Religious Enthusiasm; - common acceptation has enlarged its bounds, and increased its importance, by making it the symbol of new ideas, though not of new feelings. He who has felt a determination to pursue some noble end through perils and difficulties, has felt a genuine burst of this exalted sentiment. We may suppose it then to be produced on every

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worthy occasion, as in the cause of Religion, of our country, of Virtue, of friendship, ~~of [illegible] with of Glory~~.

The effect of Enthusiasm is to make us warm advocates in the support of the sentiments we cherish. No obstacle can prevent our progressive perseverance and count success, even if it fails. Our views are not selfish. ~~Our~~ thoughts are occupied by the objects of our attention. Impressed with the consequences of

our conduct we overlook all minor consideration and sacrifice, in the ~~generous~~ pursuit, every thing that may be necessary for its attainment.

Every Human principle has its good and bad characteristicks ~~as well as its good~~. Our best intentions may be productive of evil consequences, and ~~the most~~ praiseworthy actions of dangerous effects. There are faults of our situation ~~and~~ he that meanswell deserves our thanks, even if his projects are injurious to our interests.

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An Enthusiast sometimes forgets the maxims which the experience of Mankind has adopted, and endeavours to make the end justify the means. He will merge the minor consequence in his ultimate object. He will overlook the common employments of life, and give up his mind to noble summits, and by this means, often brings ruin upon himself and those with whom he is connected. Immersed in visionary dreams ~~dreams~~ he often forms plans, in their nature and attainment ~~fancy visionary~~ alike impracticable.

Most have felt the folly of the airy schemes, denominated Castle-Building, which uniformly fill the brain with strange concepts quite out of the sphere of possibility, placing us in new situations, and producing pleasures hitherto untasted. Such crazy schemes are the amusements of Enthusiasts, and indicate a mind with more imagination than good sense. ~~Whole we admit~~ though such are the faults of Enthusiasts, yet ~~contend that~~ they are not sufficient to counterbalance their good propensities, Excess of virtue may become vice, as well as excess of Enthusiasm

dangerous; courage may be pushed into rashness, & resolution into obstinacy. To say therefore that any thing human however exalted has its bad qualities is merely to assert it human. Comparison is the only guide by which to judge of the affairs and actions of Men. It is by comparison that any thing becomes noble and praise worthy, or mean and despicable. We can therefore never calculate on perfection, in anything human, and must be content to form our opinions on the standard

erected by the experience and observation of Mankind. Had we more exalted examples, were we more pure in morals, more elevated in intellect, virtue would be far different from what it now is, and man would exist a being far beyond his present standing and characteristics.

The most admirable effect of enthusiasm is that in some particulars it seems to elevate Man beyond the usual bounds of his nature; causing him to yield up selfish motives in the desire

of producing some good end. This is particularly evinced in Political enthusiasm, where the generous votary will often surrender his private benefit for the public good. To sacrifice life in the cause of country, is so common as not to require particular mention; and fortune has been yielded up on the same occasion, without a murmur. When called forth by the exigency of the times, this sentiment has seldom failed to glow with an energy, which has ensured

the success of the cause in which it was engaged. When our native soil is invaded, every true son of freedom stands forth in its defence. When a tyrant would force chains upon Republicans, he is met and repulsed with manly firmness. That land must be miserable indeed where the People are too feeble or too indolent, or too indifferent, to defend her interest.

Religious Enthusiasm

however sublime in its contemplations is more dangerous in its consequences, than any other ~~species~~. Confined to elevated devotion, to abstracted ideas of the Creator, it is more noble than any other object that can engage our attention, ~~or command our feelings~~. But when it descends to doctrinal points of religious worship, and leaves the proper bounds of its contemplations, it is sure to confound the essentials with trifles, & to be hurried into intolerance

and bigotry.

Enthusiasm in whatever is productive of good to man, is among the happiest objects of its pursuit, whether as enlarging the powers of the mind or as adding to the comforts, and conveniences of society. The true Philanthropist is one who seldom exists. His exertions are therefore worthy of a greater degree of admiration, because being rare, they are of course more difficult.

To descend to particulars, in every branch of its merits, would be to enter into a long discussion. With a definition so extensive as ours, there is no virtue in which it may not be exerted, whether large in its ~~[illegible]~~, or among the little affections which play about in Society.

He who has felt its influence beating in his bosom, must be cold indeed, if not elevated by its effects. With Chivalric ardour

he can wish to meet any danger, with unfailing firmness; he can persevere in pursuit of his objects; he is not to be prevented nor restrained by force, nor by fear, from the elevation of his ideas; he acquires a new ~~chara~~ kind of pleasure, a Romantic character, which heightens the colouring of surrounding Nature, and gives an inexpressible charm to every thing that he undertakes. When life flows

on calm and unruffled, as the stream in its progress over a level surface, its sameness becomes tiresome; variety is the charm of life, and gives a zest to every enjoyment. Enthusiasm is ever placing us in new situations, & calling up other sentiments and powers into exertion. It almost invariably leads, when disciplined by sober reason, to individual happiness & honour. We are led on imperceptibly from one improvement to another

till we attain a kind of mind, well suited for great, for active, unfailing enterprise; for noble, daring & invincible resolution; characteristicks that raise the Individual far beyond the level of common mortals, and fit him for success in every generous pursuit.

W.